

MINUTES
SAN DIEGO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Regular Meeting – October 9, 2009
DPLU Hearing Room, 9:00 a.m.

The meeting convened at 9:05 a.m., recessed at 10:40 a.m., reconvened at 11:05 a.m., recessed at 12:02 p.m., reconvened at 1:07 p.m., recessed at 2:25 p.m., reconvened at 2:55 p.m., recessed at 4:30 p.m., reconvened at 4:35 p.m. and adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Beck, Brooks, Day, Norby, Pallinger, Riess, Woods

Commissioners Absent: None

Advisors Present: Areigat, Goralka, Sinsay (DPW); Taylor OCC

Staff Present: Aquino, Beddow, Gibson, Giffen, Jaszowskiak, Loy, Murphy, Raver, Real, Steinhoff, Winslow, Jones (recording secretary)

B. Statement of Planning Commission's Proceedings, Approval of Minutes for the Meeting of September 25, 2009

Action: Day - Norby

Approve the Minutes of September 25, 2009.

Ayes: 7 - Beck, Brooks, Day, Norby, Pallinger, Riess, Woods
Noes: 0 - None
Abstain: 0 - None
Absent: 0 - None

C. Public Communication: Opportunity for members of the public to speak to the Commission on any subject matter within the Commission's jurisdiction but not an item on today's Agenda.

None.

D. Announcement of Handout Materials Related to Today's Agenda Items

E. Requests for Continuance

F. Formation of Consent Calendar

GPA 04-006, SP 04-006, R04-013, VTM
5381RPL⁴ and S04-035, Agenda Item 1:

1. Merriam Mountains Master Planned Community, General Plan Amendment (GPA) 04-006, Specific Plan (SP) 04-006, Zone Reclassification R04-013, Vesting Tentative Map (VTM) 5381RPL⁴ and Site Plan S04-035, North County Metropolitan Subregional Plan and Bonsall Community Plan Areas

Proposed master-planned community consisting of 2,700 residences on 2,327 acres of land. Included in this proposal is up to 110,000 square feet of neighborhood commercial uses, a fire station and recreational facilities, and the preservation of more than 50% of the project site in a biological open space easement. The project also includes improvements to Deer Springs Road, Twin Oaks Valley Road, I-15 north and southbound ramps at Deer Springs Road, and various other intersection improvements that would be completed throughout the community as part of project implementation. Applications to be considered include a General Plan Amendment (GPA), Specific Plan (SP), a Zone Reclassification, Vesting Tentative Map (VTM) and Site plan. Other County actions requested by the applicant include an amendment to the County Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO) and the adoption of a Statement of Reasons to extinguish access to mineral resources of statewide significance. The project site is located northwest of the I-15/Deer Springs Road interchange.

Staff Presentation: Real, Loy

Proponents: 27; Opponents: 31

Discussion:

Staff provides a brief description of the proposed project and the project site, which is comprised of 58 separate parcels under multiple ownerships. The property is largely undisturbed and consists of chaparral-covered mountains and ridgelines, steep-slope valleys, and significant rock outcroppings. Elevation ranges from approximately 800 to 1,800 feet. The proposed project includes 2,700 residences of differing housing types in five separate neighborhoods, a 1,200-acre biological preserve, commercial uses, a new fire station, numerous amenities including several public and private parks to be maintained by the homeowners association or similar entity, trails, pathways, onsite roads, extensive offsite road improvements, and a new emergency access road.

**GPA 04-006, SP 04-006, R04-013, VTM
5381RPL⁴ and S04-035, Agenda Item 1:**

Development will be clustered near the southern portion of the property, and will encroach on steep slopes to an extent slightly greater than allowed under the County's Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO). This clustering will also result in the loss of mining opportunities on the northern half of the project site. The applicant will seek an exemption from the RPO and adoption of a Statement of Reasons pursuant to the State Mining and Reclamation Act to address these impacts. The service availability form from the Valley Center Water District remains active, and the applicant has also supplied a water supply assessment. Staff acknowledges that the project site is located in a high fire-severity zone and has steep slopes, but explains that a fire protection plan was prepared and thoroughly reviewed by many entities prior to the Department making a determination that it is sufficient.

Staff notes that some of the proposed road improvements are outside County of San Diego jurisdiction and will be completed under separate agreements with the applicant and those other jurisdictions. This is a cause of concern for some of the Planning Commissioners, but Staff explains that the County has no control over improvements required outside County jurisdiction.

Project proponents welcome the introduction of commercial uses in this area, and applaud the proposed road improvements. They believe the proposed project is an excellent example of smart growth, and note that it will be located near major transportation corridors, will help lessen the County's housing shortage, will bring additional jobs to the area and will actually enhance safety from wildfires by installation of defensible spaces throughout the development and the utilization of fire resistant construction materials.

Those opposed to the project, including members of the Hidden Meadows Sponsor Group and, though no representative was present, the Bonsall Community Sponsor Group, express concerns about the project's visual impacts, incompatibility with community character, the County's current and future General Plan, and the City of San Marcos' General Plan. They also discuss the adequacy of the EIR, water availability from the Vallecitos Water District, wildfire hazards and the need for an emergency evacuation plan, air and noise pollution resulting from blasting and construction, increased traffic, and the project's impacts on existing uses, such as the Golden Door Spa.

**GPA 04-006, SP 04-006, R04-013, VTM
5381RPL⁴ and S04-035, Agenda Item 1:**

The applicant informs the Planning Commission that several concerns raised by representatives of the City of San Marcos and the applicant have been resolved today. Concerns regarding landscaping requirements and undergrounding utilities remain unresolved, but discussions are ongoing. City of San Marcos representatives urge the Planning Commission to recommend that the County of San Diego become a third party in any agreement formed between the City of San Marcos and the applicant. They believe this will ensure that the proposed mitigation of the project's direct and cumulative impacts is provided in a timely manner.

Commissioner Riess supports the City of San Marcos' requirements for undergrounding utilities, noting that it's consistent with their plans and their streetscape. Commissioner Beck concurs. Commissioner Beck recommends that the proposed affordable housing be dispersed throughout the project site. Chairman Woods supports the recommendation for an emergency evacuation plan. He also recommends that construction be limited to five days a week rather than six, and discusses the need for noise abatement provisions after development.

Several Planning Commissioners discuss the need for additional information before sending their recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Commissioners determine that they need:

A cumulative analysis of this project with respect to other projects planned for the area, and whether those projects are being reviewed under the County's General Plan;

A cumulative analysis of this project with respect to other projects planned for the area, and whether those projects are being reviewed under the County's General Plan;

Additional information regarding the request for environmental studies that would be required if the project was a mining operation;

Additional information regarding the purpose and need for this project;

Additional information regarding potential impacts to the Golden Door Spa;

**GPA 04-006, SP 04-006, R04-013, VTM
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Additional information regarding the evacuation plan discussed today and its impacts on development of the proposed project;

Clarification of the traffic trips generated during rush hour;

Additional information regarding the RPO, the North County MSCP, whether a Habitat Loss Permit is necessary and whether the wildlife agencies are supportive of the project

Staff's rational for the recommendation for approval under the proposed General Plan;

Definitive information from the Water District regarding water availability for this project;

Additional information regarding the timing of construction for the proposed fire station;

Additional information regarding protection or impacts to, and costs for management of the biological and archeological resources, as well as restoration;

Clarification regarding whether the Fire District needs to approve a Fire Protection Plan;

Additional information regarding who will own fee title to the biological open space;

Additional information regarding designating the open space as a conservation easement;

Additional information regarding the topography of the project site and how much of it can be defined as steep slope;

Additional information regarding the long-term impacts of the proposed revisions to the Community and General Plans, and the RPO waiver;

Additional information regarding the timeframe of the proposed development;

**GPA 04-006, SP 04-006, R04-013, VTM
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Staff's comments regarding the July 21, 1009 letter from the Sheriff's Department; and

Additional information regarding the current water restrictions and their impacts.

Action: Day - Brooks

Close public testimony and continue this hearing to the meeting of October 23, 2009. During that time, those Planning Commissioners interested in viewing the project site will do so.

Ayes:	7 -	Beck, Brooks, Day, Norby, Pallinger, Riess, Woods
Noes:	0 -	None
Abstain:	0 -	None
Absent:	0 -	None

Administrative:

G. Report on actions of Planning Commission's Subcommittees:

No reports were provided.

H. Designation of member to represent Commission at Board of Supervisors:

No one was designated to represent the Planning Commission at the October 14 or October 21, 2009 Board of Supervisors meeting.

I. Discussion of correspondence received by Planning Commission:

None correspondence received.

H. Scheduled Meetings:

October 23, 2009	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
November 6, 2009	Special Meeting, General Plan Update, DPLU Hearing Room, 9:00 a.m.
November 13, 2009	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
November 19, 2009	Special Meeting, General Plan Update, DPLU Hearing Room, 9:00 a.m.
November 20, 2009	Special Meeting, General Plan Update, DPLU Hearing Room, 9:00 a.m.
December 4, 2009	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
December 18, 2009	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
January 8, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
January 22, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
February 5, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
February 19, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room

Administrative:

March 5, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
March 19, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
April 2, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
April 16, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
April 30, 2010	Planning Commission Workshop, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
May 14, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
May 28, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
June 11, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
June 25, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
July 9, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
July 23, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
August 6, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
August 20, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
September 10, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
September 24, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
October 8, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
October 22, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room
November 5, 2010	Regular Meeting, 9:00 a.m., DPLU Hearing Room

There being no further business to be considered at this time, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 4:55 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. on October 23, 2009 in the DPLU Hearing Room, 5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B, San Diego, California.